



VOL. VII, NO. 3

APRIL, 1983

# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## City Views Valley As Planning Prototype

By Jeff Kaliss

A report released last week by the San Francisco Department of City Planning shows that government is not only taking a close look at Noe Valley, but it's also giving a close listen to what neighborhood merchants and residents have to say.

The planning department chose the 24th Street—Noe Valley Commercial District (NCD) for a pilot study of the effects of rezoning on a neighborhood. This rezoning would involve creating separate NCDs for each of the city's residential-commercial districts. Each would be specially tailored to the area, with set limits on the number, size and type of commercial enterprises permitted.

The NCDs would replace the Special Use District ordinances (SUDs), which have governed 24th Street and other districts for the past three years, and would specify under what conditions merchants seeking to open new businesses or expand old ones would have to apply to the department for a permit.

To develop this study, department planners spent many months surveying the 392 residential and 194 commercial uses along the 4½-block strip of 24th Street between Chattanooga and Diamond Streets.

The planners also measured rear yards, counted traffic, interviewed realtors, and studied the history of the neighborhood's commercial growth and actions on applications for zoning permits.

An opportunity to suggest appropriate "zoning controls" was given to each of the four recognized neighborhood groups: the Business & Professional As-

sociation of Noe Valley, the East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club, the Friends of Noe Valley, and the Noe Valley Merchants Association. The latter two groups wrote a joint letter to the department about their common goals, as well as their differences.

Chief among the differences was the conversion of upper-story space in the strip's 166 buildings from residential to commercial use, which the Merchants supported and the Friends categorically opposed. Basically, the Merchants wanted more room for new and expanding business and professional firms, while the Friends stood by their long-term policy of preserving space for tenants.

The B&P and the E&W were less vocal during hearings at City Hall, but generally favored the Friends' position.

The planning department's report recommends a ban on "retail sales and personal services on second floors and above. Medical and other professional offices, on the other hand, could locate on second floors as long as they didn't displace any residences. Hotels and movie theaters have slightly better chances than other retail enterprises: they can apply for permits to build "if housing is not removed."

Some other features of the proposed NCD:

**Purpose of the Controls.** The new zoning would "preserve the existing small scale development. Preserve the existing upper story housing units on 24th Street, accommodate limited office growth on the second story compatible with the existing residential character,

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## Butcher's Dilemma: How to Slice A Victorian

By Gardner Haskell

The last fishwrap at Ver Brugge's Meat & Fish Market's current address (3939 24th St.) will occur "sometime in August," according to senior butcher Tom Carroll.

It seems the Real Food Company next door has asked Ver Brugge to vacate the premises. Kimhall Allen, who owns Real Food and the building that houses both businesses, told the *Voice* he wanted to expand his organic emporium, one of four food stores he owns in the Bay Area.

"We want to build on the back of the lot to expand the store back to the property line," Allen said, "and we need to get the building material through Ver Brugge's." Two and a half years ago, Allen had a valid building permit to extend Real Food to the rear property line, but discovered there was no viable way to get materials back to the construction site.

Although Ver Brugge's lease expires March 31, 1983, Allen is not forcing anybody out onto the street. "Ver Brugge and I are on good terms," Allen said, adding he hoped that Ver Brugge's would move to a new location sometime this summer, which would enable Allen to get his permits and begin construction.

William Ver Brugge himself owns three Bay Area meat and fish markets, but he wants to stay in the neighborhood by moving his store diagonally across 24th Street to a building he owns at

*From Ruffles to Truffles*

## Elaine's Loses Lease

By Steve Steinberg

When Elaine Greenberg was still a fulltime elementary school teacher, her friends all urged her to open a second-hand women's clothing store. Greenberg eventually followed their advice, and the result was *Elaine's* at 24th and Castro Streets, one of Noe Valley's most popular shops.

Last month, however, *Elaine's* fell victim to the harsh realities of business. Lack of a lease and a disagreement over the shop's appearance forced Greenberg to vacate Noe Valley and relocate her store in the Sunset District.

In Greenberg's view, the ultimate cause of the store's demise was her inexperience in business matters. She explained that when she first opened the

apparel shop in 1980, lack of "savvy" and fear of failure kept her from asking for a long-term lease. Instead, she settled for a one-year rental agreement. When the year was up, Josef Panzer of Pyramid Properties, manager of her building, refused to renegotiate her lease. Greenberg found herself renting on a month-to-month basis. Then late last year she received notice to move within 60 days—a deadline that was later extended until the end of March.

"I was angry and very upset and very frustrated," Greenberg said. "I had built up a business here and enjoyed the neighborhood and the people."

Greenberg began her business after 12 years of teaching kindergarten and first

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## • City Prototype •

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and encourage future mixed use development...prevent additional traffic and congestion...[and] regulate the location, distribution, and proliferation of certain potentially troublesome commercial uses, namely bars, restaurants, liquor stores, amusement enterprises, hotels, and financial offices."

**Boundaries.** The plan would delete from the district some residential lots on Castro and Diamond Streets near 24th, and add some partly commercial lots on Church and Castro Streets and on 24th near Douglass.

**Density & Floor Area.** Housing units may be established at a higher density—one to 600 instead of one to 800 square feet, and the ratio of commercial floor area to lot area has been lowered from 1.8:1 to 1.5:1.

To further "restore the incentive to provide housing," owners would not be required to provide off-street parking for the first four of any new housing units.

**Liquor.** A special permit would be required for "any existing restaurant applying either to begin selling alcoholic beverages of any type for the first time or to begin selling full liquor when they had previously been restricted to the sale of only beer and wine."

New bars would have to seek conditional approval once the number on the street exceeded four. Currently there are six bars, all of which would need a permit to expand or relocate. Liquor stores, of which there are currently five, would also have their limit set at four.

**Restaurants.** The NCD would continue to restrict the number of restaurants, but would differentiate between full-service and self-service. The number of full-service restaurants would be limited to 12 and self-service to 8. With 15 and 9 of these, respectively, we've already exceeded the quotas on 24th Street.

These controls would also apply in cases, like that of Little Italy last year, where an existing restaurant wants to expand or relocate. Fast food establishments would have a permit threshold of four, although there are presently five on the strip.

In all such instances where the limit has already been exceeded, a permit will automatically be required.

**Outdoor Activity.** Any business wishing, like Acme and Maggie's, to extend itself *al fresco*, would have to go through the permit process to avoid creating "an almost unbearable burden on and nuisance to the residents" living nearby.

One aspect of the SUD that would be incorporated into the new NCD is a ban on "adult" entertainment facilities and cabarets. The report points out that currently "both of the establishments in the district which offer massages are affiliated with beauty salons." Also, it says the only place with a cabaret permit, "serving food and/or beverages for consumption on the premises between 2 and 6 a.m.," is the Happy Donuts Factory.

Amusement enterprises, including night clubs, billiard parlors, and video dens, could operate on the ground story with a permit, and trade shops, of which there are currently four on the strip, could continue to locate at ground level.

Included in the report are recommendations from each of the four neighborhood groups. These show there was general support for restrictions on liquor, food service, and size of buildings, although the Friends favored more off-street parking and the Merchants smaller yards.

The East & West of Castro Club emerged as the most stringent group, opposing nearly every type of retail use except laundries, dry cleaners and gas stations.

Most groups have not yet had time to react to the study, but Mark Cohen, adviser to the Friends' Planning Committee and a long-time student of gentrification, said he was "impressed with the depth of the department's research."

Cohen thinks the proposed zoning achieves a balance of the second-story concerns of the Friends and Merchants. He hopes that all groups will be "strenuous in support" of the report when it comes under the scrutiny of a public hearing later this year.

"We're now at a critical point," warned Cohen, "because we can't afford to lose any of the neighborhood's diversity."

Scott Dowdee, a department planner and major contributor to the report, points out that the City Attorney has yet to sign off on the overall rezoning framework. He added that after approval by the planning commission the department would need to prepare more reports, on the 24th Street model, for the Castro, Haight Street, Upper Fillmore, and other districts. The SUD is still in force on 24th Street, and it could be next year before it yields to the NCD, as revised by public testimony and commission action.

In the meantime, you can amuse yourself with these Noe numbers dredged up by the report:

- There are 12,798 Noe Valley folk, who, according to the State Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control's standards, deserve six establishments selling on-site liquor, but currently have seven.

- Residents are supporting 12 on-site beer and wine restaurants, exceeding the citywide average by 300 percent. (This gives the area a slot on the state-city's list of "police problems.")

- Every 1.88 persons owns a car, and 49 percent either drive or ride these vehicles to work, with 448 of them rolling westward along 24th Street between 4:45 and 5:45 p.m. weekdays. When they return to 24th Street for their Saturday afternoon shopping sorties, they find that 97 percent of the "legal" on-street parking places are already occupied.

The department believes a signal at 24th and Noe might help control the flow of traffic, if not the flow of alcohol. □

## • Exit Elaine's •

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grade in San Bruno (she still teaches there one day a week). The store proved a means of escaping teacher burnout and also satisfied her current need "to be around adults more than children."

Greenberg always enjoyed wearing used and antique clothes and liked to look for them in unusual places. She was also a collector "of everything" and would share her finds with friends. Her interests proved to be good preparation for the shop, and the feedback she's received from customers at *Elaine's* has meant a great deal to her.

According to Greenberg, Panzer told her he wanted her to move because another business had offered substantially higher rent and would upgrade the storefront. She said she didn't try to match offers because she felt that Panzer wouldn't let her stay in any case. She later learned that *Cocolat*, the chocolate confectionary chain, was the company interested in taking over her location.

Panzer confirmed that negotiations with *Cocolat* were in progress, but said a lease had not yet been agreed upon. He thinks *Cocolat* would be "a fine adjunct to the neighborhood."

As for *Elaine's*, he said he'd been unwilling to renew Greenberg's lease because he "could not come to terms on a lot of things involving the operation of [her] business." Specifically, he complained about overcrowding in the store, noting that the shop was "piled high" with bags of clothing. He added that both he and the building's owners had decided not to extend the lease.

Greenberg defended her shop's appearance, saying that it was in the nature of secondhand clothing stores to have a large volume of clothing. "The people who shop in my kind of a store enjoy going through lots of merchandise."

Panzer said he was all too aware of *Elaine's* popularity, having received large quantities of "hate mail" from the store's customers after word of the eviction got out. He added that he was "sorry to see Elaine leave the neighborhood. I only wish I could have offered her a larger space in another store where she could have utilized display and utilized her merchandizing a little more effectively."

Panzer, who has managed the 24th and Castro Street building for the past three years, said he expected *Cocolat's* entry into the neighborhood to bring in much new business beneficial to all Noe Valley merchants.

*Elaine's* new location is at 1372 Ninth Ave., between Irving and Judah Streets. Greenberg, who is still a Noe Valley resident, said that although she was "very unhappy" about having to move her business out of the Valley, she thought the shop would do well in its new setting. Just to make sure, she obtained a 10-year lease for her new store.

Best of luck, Elaine. □

## THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

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3968-70 24th St., just west of Bell Market.

"I'm not looking for a return on the building," Ver Brugge said, "I'm just looking to perpetuate the business."

He wants to jack up the old grey Victorian and put the meat market in what is now the basement, keeping the building's exterior intact. There'd be some painting and sprucing up, but the building would remain aesthetically Victorian.

The problem is that this building currently houses two residential flats. Ver Brugge feels that in order to make his remodeling "financially feasible," in other words, to afford anticipated payments on a bank loan, he would have to "convert" approximately 70 percent of the lower level flat into office space, which would bring higher income than residences.

Under the provisions of the Special Use District governing 24th Street, Ver Brugge would need a permit from the city planning commission to make such a conversion since it would displace housing.

Enter the Friends of Noe Valley, a neighborhood group that believes Noe Valley needs every bit of residential space it has. Mark Cohen, adviser to the Friends' Planning Committee, says the Friends would have strongly opposed Ver Brugge's converting the entire flat into office space. However, Ver Brugge has submitted revised plans to the city which include a small studio apartment within the proposed two office spaces on the first floor.

Cohen believes that Ver Brugge "is a sincere person, and wants to do the right thing," but he notes that the Friends have traditionally opposed the loss of any living space above the street level.

Late last month the issue was still unresolved. The planning commission had for the second time postponed a decision on Ver Brugge's permit appeal, this time to an April 21 hearing.

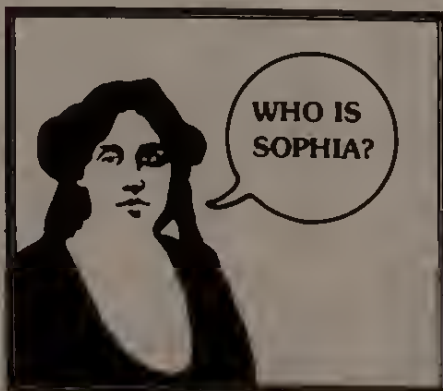
There are no bad guys in this story, just two very nice businessmen who want to sell food in Noe Valley, and a neighborhood that wants to protect both its longtime merchants and residential units.

Speaking for himself and probably many other shoppers, Cohen said, "Ver Brugge's is a community-serving business, and it would be a shame for them to leave." □

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# Getting AIDS Doesn't Mean Giving Up

By Gary Sabo

When he saw the headline shouting "COALITION TREASURER: AIDS VICTIM" in a local newspaper, Noe Valley resident Mark Feldman read on to find out who died. A paragraph into the article, he realized it was written about him.

"Where does that leave you?" he groaned later. "You don't say you're a 'victim' of a cold. There are people out there who believe I'm dead."

Words like "victim," "disease," and "patient"—dogged attachments to most discussions of AIDS—draw 30-year-old Feldman's scorn. The positive approach to life he has adopted since discovering he had AIDS late last year defies such concepts.

"There is no evidence that people with AIDS have to die," he insists. "The statisticians, as I like to call them, speculate people with AIDS will be around for longer and longer lengths of time. It used to be a year, then 18 months, now they're kicking around two years. I've heard talk of five years."

Feldman believes that much of the syndrome's treatment is the patient's work. A life-threatening problem like AIDS, which stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, produces a downward spiral in the quality of an individual's life. But Feldman feels the tendency can be reversed by focusing on wellness, not illness, and that personal vigilance can bring a return to good health.

To keep his own grip on life, Feldman remains active in the community. He holds leadership positions in Sha'ar Zahav Synagogue and the Coalition for Human Rights, and keeps in touch with the Kaposi's Sarcoma Research and Education Foundation and the Shanti Project, a counseling center for those suffering from AIDS and other life-threatening illnesses. He's had to take a leave of absence from his job as director of admissions at New College of California, but he still tries to help out when he can.

Generating the energy for these activities is not always easy. "There are times when I feel lousy. I have to tell myself to get up, to call a friend, to eat. To use humor."

Family and friends play an important role in Feldman's drive for wellness. They supply the extra energy in his life, the fuel for fending off the syndrome's sometimes grisly effects. Friends frequently bring him food to make sure he's eating well. And in late March, his family threw a party for him in New York to celebrate his 31st birthday. He's particularly grateful to his associates at New College for their support and encouragement.

As for medical treatment, Feldman tries everything that offers a glimmer of hope, from Interferon to meditation. He is also relying on "evolution, God, and

my own thirty years of push" to pull him through. "Whatever it takes to call on my inner resources I'm going to do it."

But what else can be done to fight this deadly enemy? That's the question numerous research projects are championing at the bit to answer. Unfortunately, funding for AIDS research has not been forthcoming, particularly on the federal level.

Feldman points out that though legislators are very sensitive to issues like foreign aid and disaster relief, the government has dragged its feet on allocating money to rescue at least two major American cities from an epidemic. "The money being put into AIDS research won't pay for the paint on the MX missiles," he says. "When they come up with 20 million dollars, then we'll be talking English."

Ed Power of the Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation certainly agrees. "We haven't seen the kind of outpouring of money that we really need if we're going to make any headway in doing research." In short, grants thus far have been a drop in the bucket.

It's going to take a lot more to find out what makes AIDS happen. The syndrome is commonly misunderstood. Strictly speaking, it is more a process than a disease, the only symptom being a low count of a certain kind of cell in the immune system. These cells fight off viral, fungal and parasitical infections. They have counterparts that ward off colds, flus and bacterial infections, and in AIDS-affected individuals these latter cells remain intact. A sufferer of the syndrome will treat a hug the same way a healthy individual would.

But he/she is open prey to a number of diseases that normal systems throw off, some of them believed to be generated in the body as part of its natural processes. PCP (pneumocystis carinii pneumonia), for example, may be caused by a protozoan that inhabits everyone's body. Kaposi's Sarcoma, one of the first diseases associated with AIDS, appears as blue, red or purple lesions beneath or on top of the skin, and may be a cancer that the body creates through mutation and that simply isn't gobbled up by immunodeficient systems.

The measure of an AIDS patient's wellness is gauged by a count of the weakened group of cells, the T-helper cells. Lowered counts aren't unusual in people who are recovering from a bout with a serious disease. It may take a healthy person several months to recover his average number. But immunodeficient individuals lack the bounce-back effect. Their count will generally fall and stay low.

Over the past three years, an alarming increase in AIDS cases was noticed in gay men and intravenous drug users; then Haitians and hemophiliacs were added to the list of high-risk individuals.

But what caused the epidemic in the first place? For now, the answer is sim-



Photo by Irene Kane

With a little help from his friends and a continuing commitment to his community, Mark Feldman is not about to let AIDS run his life.

ply that no one knows. In its hunger for facts where few can be found, the public has pinned AIDS on such absurd notions as the wrath of God and an experimental virus concocted in some federal laboratory.

And in the face of the unknown, many people have panicked. Early in the year, the problem of displaced and evicted patients rose to worrisome proportions. AIDS sufferers were being told to leave their households by hysterical roommates, sometimes in the middle of the night. Finding homes for them was more than a social problem; the January streets of San Francisco are no place to get well.

Unlike the federal government, the city has generally been sensitive to the AIDS crisis. According to Jim Geary of the Shanti Project, Mayor Dianne Feinstein has shown "a great deal of interest in various ways the city as well as community organizations could address the issue." Through various facilities used for the homeless, the mayor's office has provided emergency shelter for AIDS patients with no place to go.

Despite efforts to educate the public, fear is rampant, particularly in the gay community. What few understand is that some effort is required to pass the syndrome from person to person. It is not airborne, a casually contagious critter lurking in public bathrooms or on Muni handrails, waiting to pounce.

Researchers strongly suspect that blood is the primary transport for whatever causes AIDS. The list of secondary mediums includes semen, urine, feces, and possibly saliva.

In the past, spreading was linked to frequent sexual contact and the sharing of hypodermic needles. But if the disease were transmitted that easily, San Francisco and New York would long since have perished. In fact, healthy people, carrying legions of infections being fought off by their strong immune systems, are more dangerous to AIDS sufferers than vice versa.

Furthermore, there's a tendency for people to refer to AIDS as the "gay plague," much to the irritation of researchers and therapists. "It's a human

crisis," notes Power. "It's not a gay disease. It's not a Haitian disease. Diseases don't have nationalities or sexual orientations."

It may be a long time before a cure for AIDS is found. Feldman admits he knows this, but he also knows he can't wait 10 years. His emotionally athletic drive to continue living (and living well) is grounded in the belief that his body can cover for the impaired immune system.

He is wary of the drugs he must take, always asking, "Why do I need this?" To his mind, painkillers may masque the symptoms, but they often ignore the illness itself and the body's capacity for self-healing. "We need to create more respect for our hodies."

Feldman forces himself to seek out the balance of sleep, food and exercise his body needs. He also uses humor as a drug, meditates, and concentrates on positive images.

"I've led a good life," he says. In the past two years in particular, he's tried to practice moderation in all his habits. He adds ironically, "Here I am preaching this and look how far it's gotten me."

Healthy living may or may not help protect a person from AIDS. Too little is known about the syndrome. Fast living, though, probably won't help. Repeated exposure to the infectious agent that causes AIDS increases one's chances of contracting it.

But Feldman thinks it's important to point out that sex doesn't cause AIDS. "Disease causes it. Let's not condemn sex. Let's void the disease instead."

Despite all the dark times—the pain, the drugs, the times when he pulls the covers over his head and wishes it would all go away—Feldman can still see some light. "I'm learning and growing from the experience and learning a lot about myself and my friends and the world. I don't recommend it to anybody. There are better ways. But you have to make the best of it." □

If you'd like to donate time or money to AIDS research and services, here are a few places to start:

Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation  
(research and referrals)  
470 Castro St., No. 207  
Box 3360  
San Francisco 94114  
864-4376

The Shanti Project  
(volunteer counseling service)  
890 Hayes St.  
San Francisco 94117  
558-9644

For those who are concerned about possible AIDS symptoms, S.F. General (821-8830) and District Health Center No. 1 (558-3905) offer regular screening clinics.

## RED IRIS GALLERY

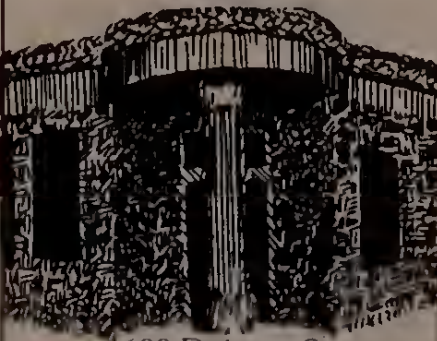
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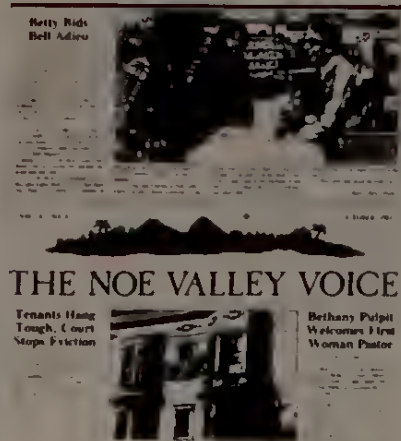
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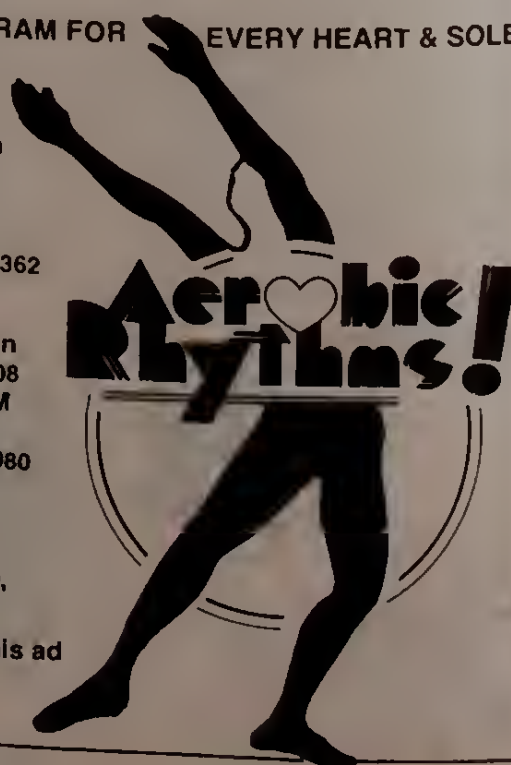
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# SHORT TAKES

## Bully Bulls

Mary Calmenson on Hoffman Street has found that it's much harder for her to get through to City Hall than it is for her neighbors' pitbulls to burrow and jump into her yard. She's been trying to get some kind of action against the dogs, who since their arrival on Fountain Street three months ago have attacked Calmenson's dog, killed a neighbor's cat, and harassed another neighbor who tried to intervene.

After failing to get a response from the pitbulls' owners, some Hoffman Street folk phoned the SPCA, who said they could apprehend the dogs only if they could be caught in the act of trespassing.

The Department of Public Health was equally unhelpful. The police department seemed unwilling to proceed past their practice of taking a report until Calmenson and some 15 neighbors directed their distress to the District Attorney, who referred them to Mark Hurley of the SFPD's Animal Control Unit. Hurley, however, proved nearly impossible to reach.

More calls were made to the mayor and to Supervisor Carol Ruth Silver, who had tried unsuccessfully to get an ordinance passed against the breed last year. Finally, the Department of Public Health was prompted to file a report with the D.A., and this internal bureaucratic communication got some results. A court date, at which the dogs' owners must appear, has been tentatively set for April 14.

Calmenson urges others plagued by these predatory pets to phone her at 647-0288.

convention, happening late this month in New York.

The committee wants to make a good showing in the Big Apple for the local group, which has been flexing its muscles since the California Writers Congress last January. So far they have worked out a precedent-setting agreement for freelancers with *Mother Jones* magazine, hired a part-time organizer, formed a steering committee as well as fiction and non-fiction groups, and set up discounts for members who lease or purchase word processors.

If you write, you'd do right to become a member, even if you don't want to fly to the East Coast. Call Marcelo Rodriguez at 641-1975 or come by the Ministry at 1021 Sanchez St. at 7 p.m. on April 7.

## Behind the Great Wall

Charlie Kennard, likable lensperson whose images of Noe Valley have graced the pages of this paper for some time, turns the tripod toward Mainland China in his current exhibit at the Chinese Culture Center, 750 Kearny St.

The 35 black-and-white photos, assembled under the title "Myriad Ages," were taken during a hiking tour last summer, and reflect Kennard's impressions of the "timelessness of the people." They include a visit to the Mt. Emei Buddhist Center in the western part of the country.

Other publications that have carried Kennard's works are *Asia 2000*, *California Living*, and *Women's Sports*. His exhibit runs through May 13, Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Muni Mutations: Drop 2, Gain 1

By Nathan Salant

Thirteen is a lucky number for Noe Valley bus riders.

When this area's favorite bus, the 11-Hoffman, is retired in August, Muni will replace it with a new 13-Guerrero line, which promises faster connections between Noe Valley and the Financial District.

Muni planned to eliminate the 11 this summer, reasoning that large numbers of "Mission Corridor" commuters would be choosing BART for trips downtown. (Starting today, April 1, Muni Fast Pass holders can use the card on BART for travel within San Francisco.)

But when public hearings in January revealed opposition to the demise of the 11-Hoffman, Muni planners decided to save the route by combining it with a portion of another line slated for elimination, the 14-Guerrero Limited.

"The public hearing process is very important," Muni spokeswoman Ann Milner said. "We tried to listen to the wishes of the public, and they did not want the 11-Hoffman to go away."

The new bus will follow the current route of the 11 from Grand View and Clipper to 24th Street and Guerrero, but will travel downtown by way of Guerrero (instead of Mission) to 14th Street. It will then resume the 11's route on Mission Street to the Ferry Building.

The new line will make only three stops along Guerrero, at 22nd, 18th and 16th Streets.

Like the 11, the 13 will operate only at peak periods (7 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m.) and will run every 12 minutes.

Muni plans to make several other changes affecting Noe Valley residents

this summer:

- The 27-Noe will be eliminated.
- To pick up the slack, the 24-Divisadero trolleys ("electrified" in July) will travel on Noe Street between 26th and 30th, and a new 27-Bryant line will be extended to serve upper Noe Valley between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- The 35-Eureka will *not* be extended from Castro Street Station to the Haight, as originally planned, but will bypass its current upper Noe Valley loop and continue along Diamond Street into Diamond Heights.

For more information on changes affecting these and other areas of the city, call Muni information at 673-6864. □

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## Organizing Writers

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# Tom Karnes Revs Up His Honest Engines

By Jane Underwood

You may know the name of your grocer, and you might be friendly with your barber, flower vendor, fireman or printer. But how many people are familiar with their local neighborhood inventor? Take Tom Karnes, for instance.

Karnes is not only a street artist who manufactures jumping peg puzzles and wooden box drums—he is also an inventor. And what's more, he pursues his works of the imagination with a passion, even though he's been legally blind for the past 10 years.

Along with friend and partner Boh Trupin, Karnes runs an "inventing" business called Honest Engines. Since 1979 the two have been collaborating on a potentially revolutionary invention called the Thermal Engine. Although the name of the invention isn't exactly flashy, if manufactured on a large scale, it could conceivably provide an alternative source of amazingly cheap energy with many possible uses—from generating electricity to irrigating crops.

The machine is a solid state heat engine that utilizes the small difference in temperature between solar-heated water and ground water. Its active element is a "shape-effect-memory" alloy called nitinol, a metal with almost magical properties that has fascinated inventors since its discovery a few years ago.

Nitinol's strange powers are varied, but basically it is an alloy that reacts forcefully when heated and cooled. Experimenters demonstrate its power by coiling cooled wire made from nitinol, then dunking it in hot water. The wire springs back to its original shape with remarkable speed; a minimum temperature change of 18°F can release 60,000 pounds of force.

Nitinol is a temperamental metal, but Karnes believes that he and Trupin have surmounted the obstacles posed by its strange properties, and that they're on the road to success.

Trupin, a theoretical physicist, had the basic idea for the engine, and then Karnes came up with the design, after which he built the prototype—a feat he accomplished despite not being able to see what he was doing!

Karnes lost his sight about 10 years ago from a disease known as retinitis-pigmentosa, but he has learned how to adjust his woodworking techniques to accommodate his blindness.

"I just have different ways of measuring things. That's the hardest part, measuring, reading a tape measure. So a lot of times I'll just do comparative lengths; I'll make something match something else. The tablesaw, that's the only dangerous thing, but I've still got all my fingers. You've just gotta know right where that blade is!"

The Thermal Engine is the first of Karnes' inventions to reach the patent stage, but he has in fact been inventing things for years.

"I've always been writing things down, making drawings. One of my first big influences was probably a book I got when I was five years old, *Telling Tommy About Famous Inventors*, or something like that.

"I have a lot of things I've written down that other people have actually produced, like the internal combustion pogo stick. I thought that was pretty bizarre, but I knew it would work. Then when I saw it in a magazine, that really impressed me. I said, well I guess I'm not so crazy after all.

"And when I was about 14, I thought of a bicycle with a great big wheel within a wheel. The person would sit on a little seat that would roll around on the inner rim, and then there would be pedals and stuff. And this big wheel would go up over the top of the rider's head. And I thought, well, that would work, but it's pretty weird. But then I saw one in a magazine a few years later and thought, maybe I *am* having some pretty good

ideas."

Karnes' more recent inventions include the toilet harp and the bottleneck koto. As for the toilet harp, Karnes hatched the idea of using a toilet lid to put a vibrato on the strings of a harp-like instrument "in a flash of inspiration!"

But most of his inventions, like the bottleneck koto (a Japanese instrument similar to a zither), have depended less on such serendipity and more on the slow, methodical process of trial and error.

"It took Edison about 15 years to finally get the lightbulb right...Well, the bottleneck koto was a long, involved process. It has a bar that goes underneath a whole hunch of strings, and the geometry is such that the strings stay in the same frequency ratios. So I can tune in a particular overtone series, scales where the notes sound like they're getting closer and closer together as you go up, and then I can change the whole pitch by moving the bar. I worked and worked and worked on trying to figure out a way to make a stringed instrument where I could do that."

So, being an inventor is more than just having a lot of ideas and jotting them down. "There's patent department literature about what inventing really is—taking an idea and executing it, building a prototype, developing it and bringing it to the marketplace. That's all a part of the process of inventing."

Asked why he hadn't patented the bottleneck koto, Karnes explained that an inventor, unlike an artist—who can sell a painting without a frame—must pay "a lot of money" to patent something. One of the most popular misconceptions about inventors, he warned, is that they get rich quick.

"You could patent it yourself for maybe six or seven hundred dollars, but you might end up with something that's worded so poorly it wouldn't hold up in court...The bottleneck koto, well, it's hard to say whether it's commercially feasible. You know, if somebody were to take it and get famous on it, and cut some hit record, then maybe it would be very popular and worth patenting. The majority of things that get patented, though, are like little parts of machines for factories. But there are some odds and ends of things that obviously would never get manufactured."

Karnes wouldn't describe himself as an eccentric—exactly. "It's more creativity through eclectic synthesis, taking something from an entirely different field, seeing a relationship and putting it together and creating some new thing or way of doing something. I mean, I know things from several different areas, but I wouldn't say that I have a wide-based education. My education's in mathematics, which has given me a good understanding of the resolution of forces, the mechanical part of engineering." (And then, of course, it helps to have a knowledge of music, and of woodworking, and of....)

Does he have an all-time favorite invention?

"Well, I don't know...I'm working on a silent helicopter..."

A real helicopter?

"Yeah."

Silent?

"Silent—that is, if I ever get it off the ground." □



Photo by Charles Kemard

Inventor Tom Karnes shows off the toilet harp and other finely crafted products of his "eclectic synthesis" of ideas.

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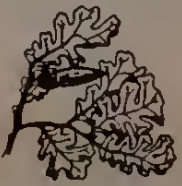


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# THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

## TWIN PEAKS ERUPT! Hundreds Flee Lava Flow, Roll Over, Mauna Loa

By Paula Pompeinine

At 2:47 a.m. (WST) April 1, San Francisco's dual mini-mountains, collectively called Twin Peaks, erupted in a blinding flash of flame and ash.

A gigantic basin of molten lava spewed from the long-dormant mountains, creating a turgid scar of carnage in the Twin Peaks and Noe Valley neighborhoods. By the time you read this, thousands of Noe Valley families will already know about it.

"When I heard the explosion, I just thought it was my ears poppin'," said local newscaster Jack Tipple, as he salvaged a pair of New Balance jogging shoes from the rubble that was once his home.

Amazingly, there were minimal casualties. But the flow was so swift and unexpected, six people waiting outside Little Italy were permanently "ensconced" in lava, reported a waiter on the scene. The petrified figures will stand as a memorial to one of the worst days in Noe Valley's history.

San Francisco Mayor Quentin Kopp immediately declared Noe Valley a disaster area and asked for city assistance to provide shelter for the emotionally numbed condo dwellers who were forced to flee the mountains' monstrous misanthropic rage.

In a controversial move, Fire Chief Dianne Feinstein ordered all personhole covers throughout the 20-block grief-stricken area removed to drain off excess lava flow.

The molten mass cleared a savage path from the apex of the volcanic craters, oozing down 24th Street to just beyond Noe Street, where it was abruptly halted by a balding man in a blue coat guarding the entrance to Bell Market parking lot.

UC Professor of Geology Dr. B.C. Proctowski, a major proponent of the "Pacific Rim Theory" of volcanic activity, said that scientists had long been aware that Twin Peaks posed one of the greatest volcanic dangers in Northern California. "It was just a matter of time before it blew again," said Proctowski, lacing up an asbestos jumpsuit.

The professor was referring to the 1850 eruption which Mark Twain, writing for the *San Francisco Daily Call*, described as follows:

"It was downright terrible. Pyroclastic flows fried men, women and children in this modern day Pompeii-like catastrophe. Rock particles mixed with superheated gasses travelled at steamboat speed and turned all those in its wake into crispy critters. Why, I'd never seen anythin' like it. Finally it got so hot, I just got the Sam Hill out of there..."

In response to the disaster, the Happy Donuts Police Substation has opened its doors to victims and is soliciting donations of canned goods, warm clothes and quaaludes for the homeless.

Street-sweeping will continue on sched-

### WARNING!

Twin Peaks is likely to erupt again very soon, geologists say. Though the initial burst of sound and poof of ash may be frightening, keep calm. If you are indoors, stay indoors. Hide under sturdy furniture. Stay near the refrigerator. If you are outside, stay outside. Don't run through burning buildings. If you are in a moving car and the lava flow approaches you, stop the car, shift the gears to reverse, and back away. After the eruption: Turn on radio or television for emergency bulletins.



It's been a cruel season for San Francisco's cutest community. After being pelted with precipitation and smothered in "snow" (see story, below), remorseful residents were trapped in their trundle beds by unscheduled igneous activity from nearby Twin Peaks.

## HUGE COCAINE SPILL Youth Rallies for Clean-up

APRIL 1—An Air Colombia flight from Bogota to Mill Valley, passing four miles directly above Douglass Park, suddenly became 1,200 tons lighter early yesterday when the pilot accidentally opened the cargo bay doors. By the time he realized his error, Noe Valley was blanketed by a three-inch-thick layer of 100 percent pure, pharmaceutical-quality cocaine.

Reaction to the mishap was swift. As word spread throughout the Bay Area, hundreds of thousands of upwardly mobile young adults swarmed into the



This ecstatic Eagle Scout had a ball helping liberate the neighborhaad from its laad of anesthetic. (See "Huge Cocaine Spill" story, above.) Here he takes a deep breath and a lang view of the work ahead.

### PG&E Crew Unearths Remains of Atlantis

A PG&E crew digging beneath 24th Street to clear blocked power lines has unearthed relics believed to be part of the lost civilization of Atlantis.

"We're not really sure just which parts of Atlantis we've got here," said a company spokesperson. "It might be the side of Atlantis, but then again it might be the front."

Scientists from the De Young Museum's Department of Irrelevant Cultures had been called in to investigate the extraordinary find.

neighborhood, most of them eager to help with clean-up efforts.

Typical of these was Lauren DeLite, a leg-warmer model and aspiring actress from Mountain View. "This is just the break I need," gushed DeLite, thigh-deep in a wind-swept toot bank beside Coast Federal. "I'm going to Hollywood in two weeks to audition for the lead in *The Karen Carpenter Story*!"

But several residents were less than thrilled about the freak blowstorm. Lorenzo Mannite, president of the Noe Valley Cocaine Merchants Association, called it "a disaster. The bottom just fell out of the market. We'll be facing massive layoffs," he warned, "couriers, financiers, mules, bindle folders—all the way down the line. And think of all the businesses on 24th Street that cater to the cocaine industry...the bars, cafes, drugstores, travel agencies. What a mess."

As if to confirm Mannite's worries, Wells Fargo released figures yesterday citing a 600 percent drop in the use of its automatic tellers after the incident.

But such economic woes were in part ameliorated by improvements in other sectors of Noe Valley's economy. Consumption of cigarettes, beer, aspirin, nasal inhalants, and psychotherapy appointments all skyrocketed following the massive coke spill.

Bulldozers on Castro Street attempted to clear a path for the 24-Divisadero, but in so doing buried Justin Jason, a 27-year-old computer speech therapist, as he waited for the bus at Elizabeth Street. Jason was rescued several hours later when a passerby heard the normally taciturn resident babbling. He managed to comment to the *Voice*: "It's like...it's like...it's like Kepler's LAWS, man, I mean, *Conic sections*. Doyouseewhatl mean? It's so perfectly mathematical, but there's this...there's this, um, HUMANISM, behind the whole thing, man, like, you know, hahahahahahahahaha..."

## Irate Neighbors Tackle Toros on Acne Deck

By Kit Kameroon

Neighbors of Noe Valley's Acne Restaurant filed a complaint with the San Francisco Planning Commission last week when it was discovered that owner Joe Cottonmouth had instituted weekly bullfights on the controversial back deck.

Neighbors whose back yards adjoin the Acne property had previously complained of excessive noise and activity on the deck, a popular hangout for the area's legions of caffeine addicts.

Cottonmouth contends that he has complied with every injunction passed down by the planning commission, including carpeting the deck, installing acoustical screens in decorator colors, and insisting that his waitpersons wear Adidas running shoes when serving the back deck.

"The bullfights are a whole new ball game, so to speak," said a neighbor who declined to be identified. "I'm not even sure they have enough room for the bulls, let alone the spectators. You can't imagine what it has done to my Sunday afternoons."

Another neighbor said that only quick evasive action had averted a catastrophe last month when one of the contestants (a 600-pound Angus) had plunged into her back yard by mistake.

"I looked up and there was this big black animal coming over the fence. If I hadn't got out of my lawn chair in time..."

Cottonmouth claims that he runs the sabbath day corridas to make up for revenue lost because of the deck's reduced hours. "They're always complaining," he said of his neighbors. "If it isn't one thing, it's something else."

Cottonmouth declined to comment on rumors that the San Francisco SPCA had been investigating conditions under which the bulls were called upon to perform. □

Continued on Page 89

Continued on Page 31



—Semi-Secret Visit—

## QEII Likes Our Valley!

Maybe it was the recently published antics of Prince Andy and his companion Koo that led the reigning monarch Queen Elizabeth to wonder: What do simple, single colonial folk do??? She decided to take a break from her recent invasion of the Bay Area to rub regal elbows with the folk of Noe Valley, and found out that the joys of gentrification can be infinitely more boring and pretentious than the pomp of an extinct empire.



The Queen began her junket, as many of us do, with an obligatory visit to the Express Teller, which glowed warmly but did not demand her autograph.



Happening upon a DanceErgotics class at Upper Noe Recreation Center, the Queen mistook it for early vespers. Here, she joins in on the "doggie lifts," practiced daily by most Danskin devotees.



Like many commoners (see Bobby Darin in background), the Queen paused for a cuppa at Herb's. Her Majesty takes it strong with sugar and milk.



Freshening her own furs at a local launderette, Her Majesty became indignant when told she could not use Canadian currency.



Thinking on the ursine urges of Chuck and Di's Baby William, the Queen decided to have 24th Street's James Company disassembled and moved, lock-stock-and-bear-all, to Windsor Castle. Bud's Ice Cream will follow shortly.



The synthesized symphonies of Brian Ena brought Our Illustrious Guest back to a higher plane of consciousness at Star Magic, where she was forced to remember that she, Philip, Nancy and Ronald are all but moles in the eye of the cosmos.



What better way to end a dilettantish day than by heating your heels in the healing waters of Elisa's Health Spa?

Photos by Joel Abramson

## On the Road With the Mobile Asylum

By Pedro Mañana

It was a crisp, cool March morning, and I had arranged to catch up with the Mobile Asylum at the Meat Market cafe. Hunched over a hagel, a cup of coffee steaming between my mittened hands, I wondered what the attendants would look like when they arrived here—the first stop on their bi-weekly sweep through Noe Valley. Who would they "collect," as I later learned they called it, and how would their presence affect the sluggish ambiance of this neo-Berkeley writers' hangout?

I got my answer minutes later, as two fresh-faced thirtyish men in starched white jumpsuits swept in. In their wake was a similarly starched nurse, absentmindedly filling a syringe from one of a jumble of small bottles clustered in her hand.

A single Meat Market patron, apparently animated by the rush of cold air from the open door, glanced over his wool plaid shoulder at the trio, stroked his moustache, then settled back into arranging the ashes and cake crumbs on his table into little piles. Nobody else took any notice of the interruption.

"Looks pretty clean today, Ned," said the one who I was to learn is called Todd Bump.

"Right," said Ned Squack, and the two jumpsuits turned to leave. They stopped short when they noticed the nurse pointing her chin in my direction.

I got up quickly, wiping a gob of the

Meat Market's prize-winning cappuccino foam from my mouth, and identified myself as the Voice reporter they had arranged to meet.

"Oh, that's right," smiled the nurse. "He's not...I forgot...Sorry."

The four of us left immediately, deciding to save introductions until we were "rolling."

Once outside, I had a chance to examine the Mobile Asylum. The white Corvair van with its distinctive red and black lettering is a familiar sight along 24th Street, but few have had a chance to penetrate its windowless shell. The interior turns out to be a marvel of efficient simplicity: two black vinyl bucket seats perfectly complementing the gray metal ridges of the floor.

With Tod and Ned up front in the seats and Moira (the nurse) perched comfortably on the spare tire, I had to fend for myself. I found I could do pretty well by alternately squatting on the floor and standing with my back curved against the van wall, with my feet apart and arms extended forward, to give me stability and cushion me against lurching to the other side should we have to swerve around a double-parked semi.

"It's pretty quiet now, but it gets a little wild once we start picking up the loonies," Tod remarked. "Up at this end of the street things aren't so bad. But when we hit Star Magic...watch out!"

Moira's head hit the side of my leg with a thud as Ned screeched to a stop. Two kids on skateboards crossed in front

of us, flipping the bird four times between them. We pulled into the bus stop, ready for our first call, the Frog Shop.

"We generally pick up anybody we find in here," Moira explained. "You can pretty much count on their being loosely wrapped."

"They're the quiet kind, though," said Tod. "And now that the store is discontinuing frogs, we expect less trouble."

There was only one customer in the shop when we entered. He was trying to decide between a frog whistle that you could clip onto your lapel, and a set of swizzle sticks with glass frogs on top. "Take it easy with him, boys, he's a regular customer," the lady behind the counter urged. Ned pulled enough bills from the man's pocket to pay for both of the amphibious novelties, and we left with our first catch of the day.

Back in the van, Tod began to explain the origin of the Mobile Asylum concept, as Ned headed us toward our next destination. Before he could explain very much, we had arrived at Plate's Bakery.

It was a sad scene, this time involving an employee, suffering from what Moira called "Decorator's Dementia," or "Redi-Whiplash."

"Some over-zealous parent brought this on," Moira sighed. "They just don't realize what an effect they have."

It took the combined efforts of Ned and Tod to lift the white-frosted baker into the van, while I held the door open and Moira groped for her little bottles.

The unfortunate woman was muttering incoherently about dinosaurs with Pac Man heads, spaceships on football fields, and surfers, surfers, and more surfers. "It just won't all FIT," she screamed.

Before we could pull out of our parking space, a crowd had gathered on the sidewalk next to the van. At its center were three people, yelling at each other. I recognized the guy from Bell Market, and it was obvious he was agitated with a shopper who had parked her car in his lot and then gone to somebody else's store.

But why did her fingernails look like little TransAmerica pyramids, and what was she yelling at the woman in the smock for?

"Just spikey little half-moons, you ninny," screamed the shopper. "What the hell am I supposed to do with these?"

"Look, lady, you want a manicure, you go to some tacky old beauty parlor. You come to us, you get sculpture," and in a flash I understood. That place that opened up next to Little Italy, I'd been wondering what sort of things went on in there.

Ned and Tod nodded to each other determinedly, and exited through opposite doors of the van. Before I knew it, the whole three-way argument had been moved inside, drowning out the conversation the Frog Shop guy was having with his swizzle sticks, and we were rolling again.

"Uh oh, trouble," said Ned before we had gone half a block. I glanced up just in time to see this pizza go flying over the

Continued on page 45



## Voice Reveals Vile Plot

A neighborhood journalist has accused the *Noe Valley Voice* of "continuously printing articles whose sole function is to call attention to the newspaper itself."

Herman Phlippur, publisher of the New Era Readership Directory (NERD), spoke before a Bay Area Independent Media Conference last month at the Noe Valley Ministry. He labeled the *Voice* "the vainest, most self-absorbed periodical this side of *Mother Jones*."

The *Noe Valley Voice* is widely regarded as the best monthly tabloid distributed free in Noe Valley, or several other places (or that matter.)

"You would think that, with their exaggerated self-esteem, the editors of this trashy little rag would at least have the good sense to uphold high journalistic standards," Phlippur remarked. "But, noooooooo. They'll actually resort to the lowest smear tactics, particularly when reporting on their critics."

During his speech, Phlippur repeatedly picked at a whitehead glistening beneath his right nostril. There was a suspicious stain on the inside of his left trouser leg.

"Tony Filbert, a writer for the old *Glen Park Perspective*, once pointed out to me that the *Voice* had become so paranoid that they'll treat a little hearsay about them as a personal attack, and respond in kind. Tony also noticed that the *Voice* rarely names sources and refuses to give its opponents a chance to respond."

Filbert, who is impotent and has had hreath, could not be reached for comment.

Phlippur ended his speech with a blast at the *Voice*'s writers: "And if their editorial policy is suspect, their writers are even worse. They've been known to fabricate entire stories, using fictitious characters, organizations, and events, just to get their names in print. Even the lack of a hyline doesn't stop them."

"Bill Yard is probably the most blatant example," the publisher concluded. □



An unknown man fooled hundreds of unsuspecting Noe Valleyites last month when he autographed free 8x10 glossies of Frances Ford Coppola with the signature of the once-famous filmmaker. Police have no motive for the senseless prank. "I waited in line for two hours...two hours...and for what? I'm furious," said one disgruntled resident.

## RASH ADS

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**FOR RENT:** Cold, dark, damp, musty basement apartment. \$750/mo. + utilities + first/last month rent + deposit. Credit references a must. Glen, Voice Box #241.



Noe Valley's craftspeople were no stick-in-the-muds when it came to responding to this winter's deluge. But once they've dried out and found their olive branch, will they need a permit to use the deck?

## Cable Cars To Clang up Castro

By Hardner Gaskette

San Francisco's highest goof yet has to be the "Save the Cable Car" prank, which last year brought in millions of dollars of free publicity.

A mere three months after ending service on all cable car routes, San Francisco's famous cars-to-the-stars are once again rolling along, packed with tourists eager to ride the clanging hill-climbers.

The re-institution comes an incredible year and a half ahead of schedule. "We discovered that the cars and tracks were actually in great shape," explained Department of Public Works spokesperson Rodney Dangerfield, "so the city decided to shelve the project."

Mayor Dianne Feinstein, pausing for publicity photos at the re-opening April 1, confirmed a rumor that new extended service to Noe Valley would start soon. Asked whether the Noe Valley line was a political ploy to divert attention from the upcoming recall election, she replied, "La-di-da, la-di-da."

A well-placed source in the mayor's office revealed, however, that "the cable car issue was, from the start, a dual project: first, to provide a series of charitable social functions for the socially prominent to attend, and second, to regenerate tourism."

The new Noe Valley Cable Car service will operate along Market from Powell to Castro Street, through Eureka Valley via Castro, eventually winding up at Bud's on 24th Street. □

## ACROSS THE FJORDS

By Richie Gnana

*The Community Board is a community service offering members of the community a forum for mediating community disputes. In the following case reports, names have been changed to protect the participants.*

The Community Board met last April 1 to discuss the case of Antoine DuPerrier and his neighbor Tex Chanesaw. Antoine, owner of Ants R Us Pet Store, complained that Tex's pet anteater, Yvonne (her real name), had been breaking into his store at night and devouring his inventory.

Tex countered that the block was not zoned for insects and that Antoine was therefore violating the housing code.

"If the building wasn't zoned for ants," Antoine responded, "then it wasn't zoned for anteaters either," at which point Tex produced a city ordinance allowing tenants to keep dogs, cats, fish, birds, and anteaters, and proceeded to stuff the decree down Antoine's throat.

A resolution of the problem was forthcoming, however, when Tex's wife ran into the room and screamed that their landlord's pet python was slowly dining upon anteater Yvonne. The meeting was abruptly adjourned.

In another case, the board met to arbitrate a problem between Gloria Hind and her hoarder Wally Walla-Walla. Gloria, who has hearing difficulties, had been playing her Richard Simmons exercise record at top volume, believing it to be Barry Manilow's Greatest Hits.

Wally, who drives a nitroglycerin delivery truck for Contra Costa County, complained that he couldn't sleep and was falling asleep at the wheel. As a

## SHORT FAKES

### Pitbull Elected Supervisor

A special emergency election following the disastrous eruption of Twin Peaks has provoked tremendous controversy. It seems a 4-year-old pitbull named Sharkey Malone was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors through an amazingly well-organized write-in campaign.

In announcing the winner, the mayor said that despite the overwhelming neighborhood support given the candidate, Sharkey would not be allowed to sit on the furniture at City Hall and must be walked around the block immediately before any council meetings.

### New Zoning Creates Hair-Styling District

In a surprising departure from past policy, the city planning commission has created a special use district for 24th Street between Church and Diamond, banning any business along the strip that does not engage in New Wave hair-cutting or styling. Shocked merchants and residents responded yesterday by dyeing their hair green and purple and erecting barber poles along the southern border of Dolores Park.

### P.O. Gives Free Stamps

Noe Valley's new postmaster, Carla Sägan, has announced that, effective immediately, all postage stamps will be free. "It's such a hummer to pay bills anyway," Sägan said. "We'll just lay the stamps on people for nothing. For the price of one nuclear submarine, nobody would have to pay postage in this country anyway."

hoarder, Wally felt entitled to the right to get a good night's sleep, but Gloria pointed out that since he hadn't paid his rent in two months, this right had been rescinded.

After careful arbitration, Gloria agreed to play her records only between the hours of 9 a.m. and 8 p.m., on the condition that Wally change his socks at least once a week. [ ]





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By Mazook

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT:** The Noe Valley Bureau of Investigation has confirmed rumors that George Herman "Babe" Ruth has come to contract terms with the San Francisco Giants baseball team and will play centerfield for the Giants in '83. He will start in the home-opener at Candlestick Park, April 5, against the San Diego Padres.

The Banhino, the Home Run King, the Sultan of Swat, the Behemoth of Swing and the Colossus of Clout has also chosen to live right here in Downtown Noe Valley, taking a flat at the Elvira Building.

The Babe says he's happy to be here and plans to practice batting at Douglass Park. Noe Valleons can only echo the words of sportswriter Johnny Kieran: "My voice may be loud above the crowd and my words just a bit uncouth, but I'll stand and shout till the last man's out: 'There never was a guy like Ruth!'" Go Giants!

**BELIEVE IT OR NOT,** the Noe Valley Bureau of Investigation has obtained a classified report showing that the S.F. Department of Public Works has set aside \$4.5 million to purchase six motorized pooper-scooper street-sweepers. By June Noe Valley sidewalks will be swept clean by these ingenious devices. (Remember, no walking or parking on the sidewalk on street-sweeping days.)

**BELIEVE IT OR DON'T.** A large Eastern insurance company has just inked an option to develop one of Downtown Noe Valley's prime corners to construct a 26-floor highrise. Company spokespersons tell us there will be offices on the first 13 floors and residences on the top 13 floors "to be consistent with the neighborhood plan of mixing commercial and residential use on 24th Street." Sorry, there will be no need for public hearings since the city already granted the developers a permit.

☎ ☎ ☎

**UNBELIEVABLE** will be the store-swapping scheduled for summer. Knish Konnection will move into Graystone Liquors and be called Knishlikkors. Quiche and Carry is taking over the Wooden Heel Shoe Repair and will be christened Quiche My Sole.

Glenn Five and Ten will consume Real

## RUMORS



Babe Ruth teams up with the Giants and moves to Noe Valley this spring.

Food II and be called Glenn V & II. Herb's Fine Foods moves over to Dan's Gas and Diesel and becomes Dan's Eat and Get Gas, easily. Holey Bagel rolls over to Happy Donuts to be Holes-R-Us. Sweet Dreams shifts to Shufats Market to be called Dreams of Shufat. The Taxman will merge with Haystack Pizza under the firm name Taxstacks & Pepperoni. How 'bout Dirt Cheap Travel and Shear Delight becoming Dirt Cheap Delights. Okay, enuff.

It's April Fool's every day in Washington, D.C. President Ronald Milhouse Reagan, by executive order, has abolished the Environmental Protection Agency. Ronnie was quoted as saying, "If the EPA cannot continue doing nothing with the taxpayers' money, then it should do nothing at all."

☎ ☎ ☎

**BELIEVABLE:** Is there hope for Herb's? Noe Valley will probably lose one of its historical Naugahyde cafes by summer, if something doesn't give leasewise.

Noe Valley's premier butcher shop, Ver Brugge's, has lost its lease and is struggling to move the shop across the street.

Look for newly assigned Captain Macia of Mission Police Station to soon depart for FBI training in the East. Don't worry, he'll be back.

Look for the police to warn the hoards of Noe Valley skateboarders not to whiz down 24th Street. Apparently a skateboarders' DMZ has been established west of Diamond and north of Elizabeth Streets. Watch out for power-sliding kids on Bones boards.

Don't look for any immediate reconciliation between the Noe Valley Merchants Association and the Business and Professional Association of Noe Valley; they seem further apart than ever. Look for the East & West of Castro Improvement Club to soon top 375 members.

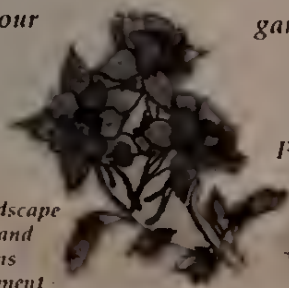
Look for electric buses soon, but try to find the bus stops.

Noe Valley Sports is concluding its big March sale today, April 1, with a drawing: first-prize is a mini-trampoline to bounce around on, second a Kodak Instamatic camera with carrying case and photo album. If you qualified to win—you spent at least \$25 at the store last month—it could be your lucky day. Get on over there.

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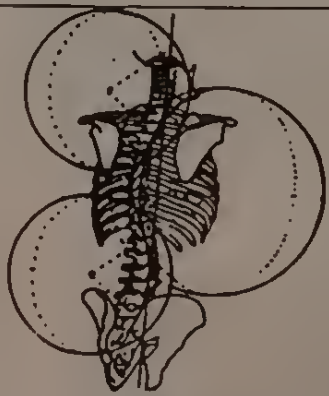
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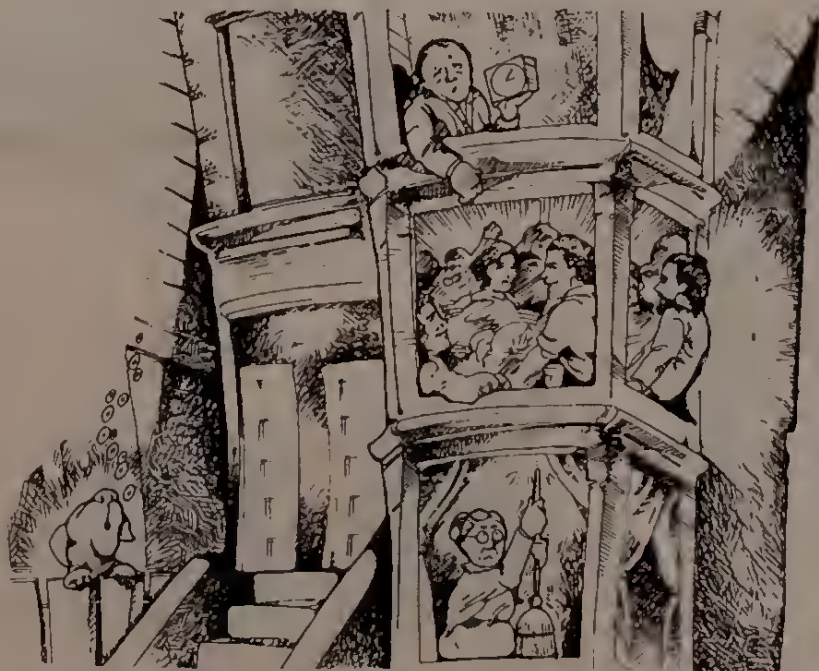
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# West and Currens Play Their Changes

By Jeff Kaliss

Two Noe Valley women in the midst of musical and personal expansion will bring their jazz to the Noe Valley Music Series later this month.

Vocalist, guitarist, and new mother Rebecca West will appear on April 16, and electric violinist Hawley Currens will perform on April 23 with the band that backed her on a recently released second album.

West's history of playing to the neighborhood goes back to 1975 when she was still single and still singing folk and country hits, first with the group Crown Chakra and later with Mirage. The groups worked for tips at Patch County on Church Street and appeared at the original Noe Valley Street Fair.

West recalls that "people were more into having a good time," and that her audiences at the bar would often include her roommates, her mailman and the clerks who checked out her food at Bell Market.

Later she found herself moving through rock and towards jazz, getting new audiences at Dizzy's Lounge on Geary Street and at the Ghirardelli Wine Cellar.

To further develop her new sound, she studied musical theory at City College and singing with Judy Davis, a well-known East Bay teacher. A Wine Cellar gig introduced her to bassist John McArdle and guitarist Robert Silver, with whom she was alternating sets. By the end of the evening they were playing together, and have continued to for the last year and a half.

Currens' musical explorations have kept her more outside the reach of the general public, though she's trying now

to become "much more accessible." She studied classical violin in the '60s at the New England Conservatory and Boston University, but became increasingly involved in the "new music" genre after her marriage to composer/conductor John Adams.

Following their relocation to San Francisco, Currens helped run the legendary Blue Dolphin performance space on San Bruno Avenue at about the same time West was strumming her guitar on Church Street.

Among the progressive jazz musicians incubated at the Blue Dolphin were saxophonist Louis Jordan, trumpeter George Sams, and the ROVA Saxophone Quartet (all of whom have graced the Noe Valley Ministry's music series).

Currens refers to her material from this period as "free music," in that it "abandoned any pretension of written music" and put her in the company of "younger people with fresher ideas." She broke with Adams at about the same time she put out her first album, "Many Years of Love to You," recorded on her own Tiwa label with the late percussionist J. P. Richards. *Downbeat* magazine found the music overly intellectual, and Currens herself admits it was "weird."

She went on absorbing the influence of Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane and Sun Ra, and collaborated in 1978 with the Tumbleweed dance company. In 1981, Mitchell Holman fashioned for her a custom five-string instrument which "avoids the frilly sound of the traditional violin."

Under the influence of her present flatmates on Dolores Street, Currens drifted gently towards Stanley Clarke, George Clinton and the feeling of funk. Most of



Photo by Charles Kennard

Rebecca West, whose folk-rock stylings charmed the chug-o-luggers of Patch County years ago, is now into jazz and motherhood.

1982 was spent recording her second album, "Ascending," which also features Holman and Rick "The Kick" Robinson on bass, Edward Spoon Mitchell on guitar, Tim Perkins on synthesizer, Sonny Williams on congas, and Charles Vick on drums, collectively called the Premonition Band. In the two months since its release, "Ascending" has gotten some airplay, and kinder words from *Downbeat*.

Although still developing, both women feel happy where they are and attribute this in part to progress in their personal lives. West married television producer Wayne Overton and brought daughter Sarah into the world late last year. She feels that "becoming a mother has given me a lot of inspiration, and made me warmer and easier on stage." At the same time, she's grateful to get away to a gig and leave Sarah with Wayne or her mother or sister for a few hours. So far Sarah has not attended any of her concerts, but she likes to join in during vocal exercises at home.

Currens appreciates being part of a couple in which "we're both very musically active." Her musical and personal

partner, Rick Robinson, has "calmed me down a bit" from her former avant-garde angst. Now she's wondering whether to have a baby and/or move to the East Coast. She finds Noe Valley "sophisticated, homey and full of good musicians," but admits, "I dream about New York."

West's concert this month at the Ministry "will have more of what I want in my music," a mixture of original material and jazz-pop melodies, to which she brings a warm, honeyed voice and a strong, sure guitar style. McArdle and Silver will be reinforced by Berislav Puhlovsky on drums, Gary Rowe on Keyboards, and Suzi McKee and West's sister Erin Zeigler on backup vocals.

Currens conceives of her event as "a record release concert," and will have the Premonition Band present some of their funky but futuristic numbers, in which Currens' violin appears as an instrument of search and celebration.

West opens at 8:30 p.m. and Currens at 8:15 p.m. on April 16 and 23, respectively. For more information, drop by the Noe Valley Ministry at 1021 Sanchez St., or call 282-2317. Tickets are \$5. □



Photo by Irene Kane

Hawley Currens, erstwhile darling of the avant-garde, has installed funk behind her futuristic fiddle. She performs with the Premonition Band at the Noe Valley Ministry April 23, a week after Rebecca West.

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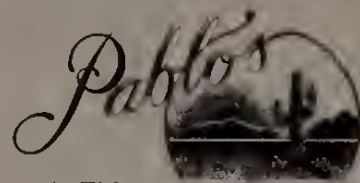
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## Across the Boards

By Jim Ford  
Community Board Volunteer

*Editor's Note: The Community Board Program provides a forum for mediating neighborhood disputes. If you need help or information, call the Noe Valley office, 821-2470. In the following case report, names and certain details have been changed to protect the participants' identity.*

John and Sarah lived next door to a local tavern and were finding it increasingly difficult to sleep at night, especially on weekends. Their complaints centered on the bar's jukebox, whose speakers were mounted on the wall between the two buildings, as well as on the noise made by patrons as they came and went. They were also being awakened by sidewalk altercations after the bar's 2 a.m. closing time.

They had already spoken to the manager, George, and to the bar owner, Steven, who both seemed cooperative, but who also felt limited by the very nature of their business. The positive effects of their conversation lasted only a few

days. So, assuming that further confrontations would not be fruitful, Sarah and John called the local Community Board.

The proceedings opened with a tone that was different from most Community Board hearings. All parties were more than willing to attend and showed a clear intention of working together toward a resolution. As both sides expressed their concerns, it became evident that this case, though perhaps difficult, presented a concrete problem, rather than an emotional conflict.

John and Sarah needed sleep, while George and Steven, operating in a legal commercial area, needed to run their business. Since each party was sympathetic to the other, no complicated personal feelings clouded the issue. The task was to hammer out how both goals could be accomplished.

After hearing both sides, the Community Board panel quickly moved the parties into the part of the meeting designed to unearth solutions. The two sides and the panelists worked hard during this phase to ensure that everyone's concerns were fully considered.

Finally the participants reached an

### MORE BOOKS

### TO READ



Illustration by Susan Koop

Here's a sampling of new arrivals at the Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St.

#### KIDS BOOKS

##### Picture Stories

*Just Like Daddy*—Frank Asch

*Cat Count*—Betsy Lewin

##### Folktales

*Little Brother & Little Sister*—Barbara Cooney

agreement suitable to all. The bar owners would insulate their speakers to cut down on the noise, and John would help with the installation. George and Steven also said they would attempt to quiet their more difficult customers.

Both parties felt that the Community Board panel had served a vital function in aiding the construction of a practical, workable agreement. All four people left the meeting feeling not only friendly toward each other, but productive as well. □

*Mother Crocodile*—Birago Diop  
*What's in Fox's Sack*—Paul Galdone

#### Fiction

*Annie on My Mind*—Nancy Garden

*Boxcar at the Center of the Universe*—

Richard Kennedy

*Hiroshima No Pika*—Toshi Maruki

#### Non-Fiction

*Little Raccoon*—Suzanne Noguette

*Behind the Scenes of a Broadway Musical*—

Bill Powers

*Mars and the Inner Planets*—Gregory Vogt

*Secrets of the Venus Fly Trap*—Jerome Wexler

#### ADULTS

##### Fiction

*The Boy from Beirut*—Robin Maughan

*Casefile: the Best of the "Nameless*

*Detective" Stories*—Bill Pronzini

*Hungry Hearts*—Francine Prose

*An Autumn in Araby*—Carola Satisbury

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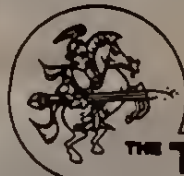
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April, 1983

## CALENDAR



Photo by Charles Kennard

**APRIL 1:** World Celebration of BARBARA WITHERS OAY. Free TV dinners and brunette wigs to first thousand guests bringing birthday gifts. Noe Valley Civic Auditorium. 12 p.m. to 12 a.m.

**APRIL 1-23:** "OFFICE ART" paintings by Marsha Ercegovic. New Arena Arts Project. 29 29th St.

**APRIL 1 - MAY 13:** "MYRIAD AGES," exhibition of photographs of the people of China by Charles Kennard. Chinese Culture Center. 750 Kearny St. Tues. - Sat. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**APRIL 2:** "WOMEN PORTRAYING WOMEN" expressionistic and psychological portraits of women. Studio W. 3137 22nd St. 4-6 p.m.

**APRIL 3:** The 61st annual EASTER SUNRISE services atop Mount Davidson. 5:45 a.m.

**APRIL 3-27:** "THE YOUNG SPIRIT" exhibit of artists from age 4 to 18. Gallery Sanchez, 1021 Sanchez St. Reception April 10. 4-6 p.m.

**APRIL 4, 11, 18, 25:** ART FOR CHILDREN. Noe Valley Ministry. 1021 Sanchez St. 4 p.m. 282-2317.

**APRIL 5:** GYMBOREE Open House. Bethany Methodist Church. 1268 Sanchez St. Babies 3-12 mos. 10:10-30 a.m. and 6:30-7 p.m. Ages 1-4. 10:30-11:30 a.m. and 7-8 p.m.

**APRIL 5:** SPECIAL ELECTION on recall of Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

**APRIL 5, 12, 19, 26:** San Francisco Ensemble Workshop presents "UBU ROI" (King Ubu) by Arthur Jarry. Noe Valley Ministry. 1021 Sanchez St. 8 p.m. 921-8533.

**APRIL 5-30:** "8 X-change from Southern Exposure," exhibit of eight artists at GALERIA MUSEO. Mission Cultural Center. 2868 Mission St. Reception April 8. 7-9 p.m.

**APRIL 6:** VOICE OF LIAN. evening of electronic music. New Performance Gallery. 3153 17th St. 8:30 p.m.

**APRIL 6:** An evening of POETRY AND PROSE by Women of Color. Modern Times Bookstore. 968 Valencia St. 7:30 p.m. 282-9246.

**APRIL 6:** EL SALVADOR Initiative Campaign. Noe Valley Committee planning meeting. 155 Vicksburg St. 7:30 p.m.

**APRIL 7:** A friendly introduction to COMPUTER CULTURE. Not a "hands-on" course, it's not that friendly. OPTIONS for Women Over Forty. Women's Building. 3543 18th St. 6:30-8 p.m.

**APRIL 7:** ORCA presents a night of music and two short plays by Gertrude Stein. Valencia Rose, 766 Valencia St. Thurs. - Fri. Sat. through April 16. 8 p.m. 552-1445.

**APRIL 7:** JEWISH/CHRISTIAN Celebration. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 10 a.m.

**APRIL 7:** CPR FOR ADULTS. Noe Valley Ministry. 1021 Sanchez St. 7-9 p.m. 282-2317.

**APRIL 8:** The Mission YMCA Senior Center EASTER PARTY AND DANCE. 4080 Mission St. 1-3 p.m.



**APRIL 9:** The San Francisco CHILDREN'S CHORUS performs at Community Music Center, 544 Capp St. 7 p.m. FREE.

**APRIL 9:** An intimate evening with singer-songwriter GARY LAPOW. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 8 p.m. 282-9246.

**APRIL 9:** LARRY FERRARA performs classical guitar at Noe Valley Music Series, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

**APRIL 10:** NOE VALLEY POETRY. Sally Abbott and Alice Rogoff. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 7:30 p.m.

**APRIL 11:** Opal Palmer and Oeborah Major read at the Monday Night POETRY SERIES. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 7:30 p.m.

**APRIL 11:** POETRY CELEBRATION with Max Schwartz and Csaba Polony. Cafe Metropole, 1361 Church St. 7:30 p.m.



**APRIL 12:** TRIPOUT TRUCK brings puppet-making to Mission Branch Library. Limited to 30 children, reservations a must. 3359 24th St. 3:30-5 p.m. 824-2810.

**APRIL 13:** Meeting to discuss SOCIALISM across the lines of schools, sects and viewpoints. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 7:30 p.m. 282-9246.

**APRIL 13:** Bilingual talk on CHILD SAFETY—burn and scald prevention for parents. Mission Branch Library, 3359 24th St. 7 p.m.

**APRIL 14:** FRIENOS OF NOE VALLEY. Steering Committee meeting. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 7:30 p.m.

**APRIL 14:** FILMS in Spanish, "El Nino del Circo" and "Jorge El Curioso." Mission Branch Library, 3359 24th St. 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

**APRIL 15:** FAT LIP Readers Theatre first anniversary/birthday celebration, an eloquent portrayal of the pain and pleasure of being fat. Women's Building, 3543 18th St. 8 p.m.

**APRIL 16:** Ouglass School SPRING FAIR with games, prizes, Pac Man food. 4235 19th St. at Collingwood. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. 826-1694.

**APRIL 16:** HIMALAYAN BELLS, a concert with Karma Moffett. Habitat Center, 3897 18th St. 8 p.m.

**APRIL 16:** STORIES FOR FREE CHILDREN. Kids of all ages welcome. Local contributors Lynn Rogers and Gayle Pearson read their tales. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 10 a.m. 282-9246.

**APRIL 16:** REBECCA WEST—jazz vocalist. Noe Valley Music Series, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

**APRIL 17:** VEIL OF ISIS, a women's chamber music ensemble. Community Music Center. 544 Capp St. 5 p.m.

**APRIL 17:** Preview of "RAGING BULL"—one-woman show with singer/comedian Lea De Laria. Valencia Rose, 766 Valencia St. Benefit for Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation. 9 p.m. 552-1445.

**APRIL 20:** RHYTHMETRON for school age kids. 3:30 p.m. FILMS for preschoolers, 10:30 a.m. Mission Branch Library, 3359 24th St.

**APRIL 21, 28:** BON VOYAGE performances by Whoopi Goldberg at Valencia Rose, 766 Valencia St. 9 p.m. 552-1445.

**APRIL 21, 28:** MARGARET JENKINS Dance Company performs at the New Performance Gallery of San Francisco, 3153 17th St. 4:40-5:30 p.m. FREE.

**APRIL 22:** THE BOBS and MARK PRITCHARD at Noe Valley Music Series, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

**APRIL 22, 23, 29, 30:** "Four Women in Search of a Solo," COMEY/ORAMA Studio W. 3137 22nd St. 7:30 p.m.

**APRIL 23:** The Bay Area Jazz Society and Bay Area Lawyers for the Arts present THE MUSIC BUSINESS, a conference on developing careers in the music world. New College of California, 777 Valencia St. 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. 775-7200.

**APRIL 23:** Noe Valley Senior Center annual RUMMAGE SALE. Lots of "Golden Oldies" and yummys. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**APRIL 23:** HAWLEY CURRENS BAND. Noe Valley Music Series, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

**APRIL 23:** CHILDREN'S OAY at Valencia Rose, with puppets, clowns, ventriloquists and more. 766 Valencia St. 1-5 p.m. 861-5404.

**APRIL 24:** NOE VALLEY POETRY. Gwen Carmen and Lorna Oee Cervantes. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 7:30 p.m.

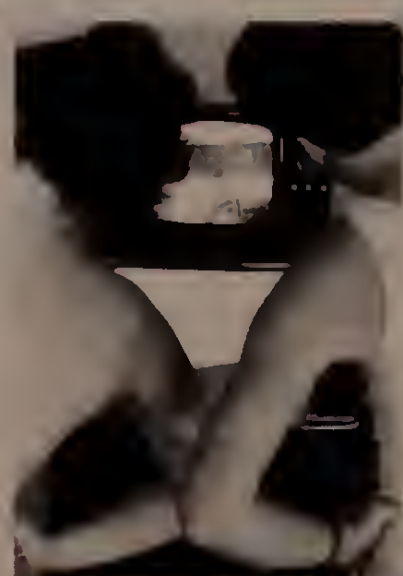
**APRIL 25:** Monday Night Poetry Series, with poets from Robert Gluck's GAY WRITERS WORKSHOP. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. 7:30 p.m.

**APRIL 27:** Slides, video, talk on CARNIVAL IN BAHIA—1983. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 7 p.m.

**APRIL 29:** ROBBIE BASHO on steel-string guitar. Noe Valley Music Series, 1021 Sanchez St. 8:15 p.m.

**APRIL 30:** DOUGLAS & ASHOKA, Indian classical music. Noe Valley Music Series, 1021 Sanchez St. 8 p.m.

**MAY 1:** RENAISSANCE MAY DAY FESTIVAL sponsored by Noe Valley Merchants Association. Lower Ouglass Park, 26th and Douglass Sts. In case of rain. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.



Happy Easter!

## The Scoop on CALENDAR

Please send Calendar items before the 15th day of the month preceding month of issue to the *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Items are published on a space-available basis, with Noe Valley neighborhood events receiving priority.

**APRIL 20, 26:** "The Voice from the Mirror," ARINA ISAACSON'S experimental theatre piece for children and adults. Valencia Rose, 766 Valencia St. 8 p.m. 552-1445.